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**LEADER OF MASSIVE VIDEO PIRACY RING
SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that SULAIMAN BAH, a leader of a massive operation that produced and sold counterfeit videotapes, was sentenced today in Manhattan federal court to 46 months in prison. MOHAMED BAH, the other leader of the video piracy ring, also received a 46-month prison term when he was sentenced in February 2003. The sentences, imposed by United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA, are believed to be among the longest ever imposed for counterfeiting of videotapes.

According to the charges, the case grew out of an investigation begun by the Motion Picture Association of America ("MPAA") following a complaint in August 1998 that pirated videotapes of copyrighted motion pictures were being sold from a storeroom at the Big Apple Storage facility at 119 East 124th Street in Manhattan("BIG APPLE").

According to the charges, on September 8, 1999, FBI agents executed a search warrant at a warehouse in Yonkers, New York, which was being used by SULAIMAN and MOHAMED BAH and their co-conspirators as a factory for making counterfeit videotapes. At the warehouse, agents recovered approximately 2,000 counterfeit videocassettes of first-run motion pictures that were not yet lawfully available on videotape, more than 11,000 blank videocassettes, more than 300 video cassette recorders that were being used to create the counterfeit cassettes, and packaging material to make the cassettes look authentic. Among the counterfeit videotapes recovered at the Yonkers warehouse were "American Pie," "The Mummy," and "Bowfinger."

The following day, according to the charges, the FBI executed a search warrant at a storeroom at BIG APPLE, where FBI agents seized approximately 1,000 videocassettes of first-run motion pictures that were not yet lawfully available on videotape, including "The Thomas Crown Affair," "The Blair Witch Project," and "Tarzan."

SULAIMAN BAH and MOHAMED BAH were indicted on November 23, 1999, along with co-defendants Cheickna Bathuily and Mamadou Barry. The case was scheduled for trial before Judge PRESKA on November 6, 2001, but SULAIMAN BAH and MOHAMED BAH failed to appear and remained fugitives until they were found and arrested outside Atlanta, Georgia. SULAIMAN BAH was arrested by the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office in Georgia on January 1, 2002. MOHAMED BAH was arrested by the United States Marshals Service in

Georgia on March 15, 2002. MOHAMED BAH and SULAIMAN BAH subsequently pled guilty to the charges in the Indictment in late 2002.

Cheickna Bathuily and Mamadou Barry pled guilty to conspiracy charges in November 2001. Barry was sentenced by Judge PRESKA in March 2002 to 10 months in prison. Bathuily is scheduled to be sentenced on May 6, 2003.

SULAIMAN BAH and MOHAMED BAH pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit videotapes of first-run motion pictures, one count of trafficking in counterfeit videotapes and one count of intentional copyright infringement. In addition to being sentenced to the 46-month prison term, the BAHs were jointly ordered to pay \$1,272,580 in restitution to the Motion Picture Association of America.

In July 1999, the Department of Justice, the FBI, and the United States Customs Service announced the establishment of a law enforcement initiative aimed at combating the growing challenge of piracy and counterfeiting of intellectual property, both domestically and internationally. This case sprung from that initiative.

SULAIMAN BAH, 35, resides in the Bronx, New York.

MOHAMED BAH, 34, resides in the Bronx, New York.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts of the

Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Yonkers Police Department and the New York City Police Department, and thanked the Motion Picture Association of America for its cooperation and assistance in the investigation. Mr. COMEY also praised the Marshals Service and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office in Georgia for their assistance in apprehending the BAHs after they fled shortly before trial.

Assistant United States Attorneys PAUL B. RADVANY and JONATHAN S. ABERNETHY are in charge of the prosecution.

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